



Traffic Safety News and Facts for Employers

January 4, 2007

Michigan News You Can Use

12th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit

The 12th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit slated for March 13-15, 2007 will take place at the Kellogg Hotel & Conference Center in East Lansing, Michigan. Six general sessions will be taking place at the Summit including speaker Chuck Hurley, Chief Executive Officer, MADD national. Thirty-five breakout sessions on various areas of traffic safety will be presented that include topics on vehicle technology, drowsy driving, naturalistic driving research (an inside view of driving behavior), drunk driving, motorcycle safety, young drivers, engineering (traffic incident management), pedestrians, novice drivers, EMS and senior drivers to name a few. For additional information on the Summit please link to http://michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3504-155468--,00.html. A registration form can also be downloaded at http://michigan.gov/msp/0,1607,7-123-1593_3504_8271---,00.html.

Societal Costs of Traffic Crashes and Crime in Michigan: 2006 Update

The Office of Highway Safety Planning released a report recently titled, Societal Costs of Traffic Crashes and Crime in Michigan: 2006 Update. The report was completed by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI). Cost estimates, including both monetary and nonmonetary quality-of-life costs specific to Michigan, were estimated for traffic crashes and index crimes by experts in the field of economics of traffic crashes and crimes. The full report can be obtained at the following site: http://michigan.gov/documents/msp/FINAL_C-C_180188_7.pdf.

Latest Traffic Safety News

USDOT Released 2005 State-by-State Data On Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities Statistics Underscore Drunk Driving Is Deadly

New state-by-state data for 2005 showed that alcohol-impaired driving remains one of the nation's deadliest crimes. Last year, 23 states and Puerto Rico showed a decrease in the fatality rate for crashes where the driver had an illegal alcohol level of at least .08, while the rate in 21 states and the District of Columbia increased and in 6 other states it remained flat. "These statistics confirm what every police officer patrolling America's streets already knows: that irresponsible use of alcohol and driving are a tragic and toxic combination that robs people of their potential and families of their loved ones," said USDOT Secretary Mary Peters. This announcement came as Peters also announced the December holiday season advertising blitz to support impaired driving enforcement committing \$7 million for paid advertising as part of its "Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest" campaign directed at men ages 21-34. This unprecedented holiday ad buy coincides with a nationwide law enforcement crackdown that ran through New Year's Eve and included thousands of police agencies throughout the United States at stepped-up law enforcement efforts that include sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols, both proven to be effective tools in getting or keeping drunk drivers off the road. The new statistical report on alcohol-related fatalities is from the agency's Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), to view, visit: <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/RNotes/2006/810686.pdf>



Car-Stereos Will Put TV Shows In Vehicles

After iPod made it easier to bring your own music into your car, Apple now helps consumers to bring their favorite TV shows and movies on wheels as well. According to an article in USA Today by Chris Woodyard, "new car-stereo units allow motorists to download movies such as Pirates of the Caribbean or NBC's The Office on their video iPod, then play it on backseat video screens. Some units even permit play on the vehicle's navigation screen, when the car is parked." Alpine, Pioneer, Clarion and Sony are all building devices to enable this technology. View the article at: http://www.usatoday.com/tech/products/2006-12-26-video-ipod-car-stereo_x.htm

First UN Global Road Safety Week

In 2005, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for a first-of-its-kind Global Road Safety Week, to be observed April 23-29, 2007. The week will focus on young road users and is intended as "an historic opportunity to raise the issue of road traffic safety injuries to a higher level." Hundreds of initiatives - local, national, regional and global - will take place during this observance, organized by governments, NGOs, and other international agencies, private sector companies, foundations and others working for safer road travel. It is hoped the events of the week will serve as launching points for new and effective road safety initiatives in the years to ahead. Several resources are currently available for those planning events during this week. The English versions of these may be accessed on the Week's official global web site at: <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/week/en/index.html>

NM Drivers Taught To Spot Drunk Drivers

A New Mexico (NM) program, Road Watch, developed by a former police officer teaches residents how to spot drunk drivers and report them to authorities, the Santa Fe New Mexican reported Dec. 1. Santa Fe Road Watch attendees were told to look for such signs of impairment as swerving, drifting, tailgating, and driving slower than the posted speed limit. Instruction was also provided on how to report a suspected drunk driver, including providing details like a license-plate number and vehicle description to the police dispatcher. Drivers also were advised to keep a safe distance from possible drunk drivers and keep dispatchers updated on their movements.

10 Safety Tips From Operation Lifesaver

Operation Lifesaver (OL), a national nonprofit group that focuses on safety at railroad crossings and along railroad rights-of-way asks motorists to heed "Top 10 Safety Tips" for safe holiday driving. According to OL, every 2 hours a train strikes a person or vehicle. OL has 3,000 certified presenters in the US and Canada that can give free safety talks to fleet drivers, community groups, and schools. To view the 10 safety tips, visit the OL website at: <http://www.oli.org/>

Online Site For Road Rage Lets Drivers Vent

Two frustrated commuters decided that there should be a public forum – a place where they and their fellow motorists could safely rant about other motorists they share the road with. They created PlateWire at www.platewire.com. The founders suggest that motorists: Take down the license plate number of the reckless car; write an angry e-mail, including the plate number and time, date and place where this all happened; and send it in to PlateWire, which then posts the information along with the license plate number and invites responses from other site viewers. Some transportation experts think this use of the Internet is not such a bad idea because it allows venting online as apposed to aggression on the roadway. The venture does raise some privacy issues along with the possibility of lawsuits over disputed public identification of erratic driving. The new site is still evolving but now accepts submissions from all 50 states and has more than 43,000 members. England has a site similar to PlateWire, www.baddriving.com Source: San Francisco Chronicle



NCSL Fall Forum Transportation Presentations

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has posted transportation-related presentations and handouts from its Fall Forum held December 5-8, 2006, in San Antonio, Texas. The presentation by TRB Executive Director Robert E. Skinner, Jr., on Critical Issues in Transportation to NCSL's Transportation Committee is among the presentations highlighted. Download the presentations at: <http://www.ncsl.org/standcomm/sctran/tranforumpres1206.htm>

Perhaps, No Signs Ahead?

According to some researchers who study the psychology of driving, an overabundance of traffic signs makes drivers less likely to pay attention to any of them. At the same time, drivers also pay less attention to their surroundings, secure in the knowledge that there will be instructions at every turn. Some researchers say the solution to this problem is to reduce -- or perhaps even eliminate -- traffic signage. It's a solution the European Union, for one, is going to try. The idea is that with fewer signs telling you how to behave, you'll pay more attention to the ones that are left. And because you'll be forced to figure more things out for yourself, you'll pay more attention to driving as well. The champion of this "less is more" philosophy is a Dutch traffic engineer named Hans Monderman who designs intersections and town squares with no traffic signage whatsoever -- no stop signs or crosswalks.

Source: The New York Times, December 17, 2006

ND Sets Empty Dinner Party Display In Memory Of Lost Lives

"Empty Dinner Party" displays are being set up in North Dakota this holiday season in remembrance of those who were killed in alcohol-related crashes. According to Marsha Lembke, Director of the North Dakota Department of Transportation Drivers License Division, "Many families across North Dakota will have one less plate to set at their holiday table because an alcohol impaired driver decided to get behind the wheel." In memory of the 56 who have lost their lives in 2005, these displays are set up. For more information, contact Billie Jo Lorus at 701- 328-4444 or 328-4441.

MADD Urges Use Of Checkpoints And Interlocks To Prevent Drunk Driving

Increased use of police checkpoints, devices to prevent convicted drunk drivers from operating their cars, and other new approaches are seen by advocates as necessary to continue cutting the number of alcohol-related traffic deaths in the U.S. The Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) say that more aggressive enforcement and interdiction is needed to push fatality rates even lower calling for increased use of ignition-interlock devices, which monitor the blood-alcohol level of drivers and prevent those with alcohol in their system from starting their car. MADD wants interlock devices to be installed on the cars of all first-time drunk-driving offenders, saying the step could save 1,600 lives annually in the U.S. Eventually, MADD would like to see the devices installed on all cars, especially as companies develop less-invasive ways to measure alcohol in the body. The Century Council, an alcohol-industry group that advocates against drunk driving, joined MADD in endorsing the devices -- if they are unobtrusive and limited to "hard-core" drinkers. For further information, visit MADD at www.madd.org

D.C. Area To Implement Congestion Pricing To Alter Commuters' Habits

According to a Washington Post Article, Washington DC commuting may soon be transformed by congestion pricing -- charging people more to travel at peak times to spread out demand. "Instead of simply getting into their cars or onto the subway, they could be induced to consider traveling at off-times, when prices dip, said Ed Weiss. "Congestion pricing could also encourage others to work from home or use telecommuting centers and perhaps lead to more carpooling and transit use." In December, Metro managers signed on to the concept by introducing a congestion pricing plan for the subway as a way to close a budget shortfall and reduce crowding during the morning and evening



rushes, especially at high-volume stations. A decision by Metro's board could be months away. This decision comes as transportation leaders in Virginia and Maryland are moving to build a network of express toll lanes -- roads on which fees increase according to traffic levels -- along the region's major commuter routes. Some commuters say they are willing to pay -- if they get better service.

Source: Washington Post, December 25, 2006

Emerging Technology Uses Eyeglasses To Project Video Images

The technology seen in Mission: Impossible that projects a widescreen video image onto your eyeglass lenses unnoticeable to anyone but you is now going to be introduced to consumers later this year. Ari Grobman, business development manager at Lumus describes the new technology, "Imagine you're sitting in a meeting and you want to read an e-mail - you just click a button on the phone in your pocket and you start reading away while you're looking attentively at the person who's giving the presentation." Besides watching movies and checking e-mails, the technology will also provide drivers with virtual navigation through GPS. A small, black box is attached to the eyewear earpiece receives the video signal and projects it into the lenses. The light waves then travel through fiber optics within the lenses where they are enlarged and directed at the eyes. To learn more about his technology, visit: <http://www.crn.com.au/print.aspx?CIID=70621&SIID=0>

News from the USDOT

Feds Opposes Car Window Law

Parents and safety advocates have been pushing for a bill in Congress to mandate power windows that would not close when an obstruction is present. But federal regulators say such devices would save few lives and cost up to \$800 million. The devices also could be a boon to carjackers or intruders, allowing them to shove arms in windows, regulators argue.

Tire Durability Test Coming Soon

The Aged Tire Durability Task Group composed of tire manufacturers, auto industry officials, experts, and government observers has endorsed a proposal for durability tests for aging tires. The group was created in 2002 in response to the Firestone tire failure on Ford Explorers in 2000. The test may be unveiled next year by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and may involve subjecting a tire to high temperatures -- up to 150 degrees Fahrenheit -- for 8 or 10 weeks in a high oxygen environment. The issue of a tire expiration date yet to be decided although some auto manufacturers back guidelines that tires should only be in service six years but NHTSA has yet to rule. However, by Sept 2009, the manufacture date will be required to be printed on tire exterior. View the article at: <http://www.detroitnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061221/AUTO01/612210354/1148>

Source: Detroit News, December 21, 2006

NHTSA Offers Free Translation Tool For Child Passenger Safety Partners

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) provides a free, accessible Quick Reference Guide, "Child Passenger English-Spanish Translation of Terms." The web-based, downloadable resource supports you in providing child passenger safety assistance to Spanish-speaking families and caregivers in your community. It provides English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English translations in an easy-to-follow table that can be used as a quick reference during seat installations or when talking with parents and caregivers. The guide is available in both HTML and PDF formats. To get started, visit: <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/CPS-Translation/index.htm>



Report Released On: The Need To Establish Rural Seat Belt Program

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has released a report that explores the need and potential results of active, ongoing seat belt use programs in rural areas. Download the report at: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/airbags/RuralCrashes.pdf

Work-Home

Bush Signs STOP Act Into Law

The STOP (Sober Truth on Preventing) Underage Drinking Act, called the most significant piece of underage-drinking prevention legislation passed by Congress in years, has been signed into law by President Bush on Dec. 20. The STOP Act establishes a national media campaign aimed at underage drinking, funds underage-drinking prevention programs in communities, and requires the Department of Health and Human Services to report annually on progress against youth drinking. The STOP Act enacts into law some of the recommendations from a Institute of Medicine study on youth drinking. The bill was endorsed both by public-health groups and alcohol-industry representatives.

International Traffic Safety News

Britain Releases Death Toll Statistics for Work-Related Crashes

Newly released 2005 data from police reports indicates that a quarter of deaths on British roadways involve at-work drivers, with 16 people dying and 117 seriously injured every week. This was the first year that police recorded the journey purpose of vehicles involved in crashes. Jools Townsend, head of education at road safety charity Brake, said: 'Road safety campaigners have suspected for many years that a large proportion of road crashes involve people driving for work. 'These figures demonstrate how important it is that, firstly, the Government takes corporate responsibility for at-work driving seriously and, secondly, all employers take the life-saving steps of educating employees on safe driving and effectively managing their road risk.' Brake is now asking for investigations by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of all fatal and serious injury crashes involving someone driving for work and for companies to be required by the HSE to report all at-work road crashes.

Source: FleetNewsNet, December 21, 2006

Canadian Poll Finds Support For Renewed Efforts To Curb Drunk Driving

A new poll by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) reveals that renewed efforts are needed to get drunk drivers off Canadian roads. According to the poll, Canadians made 10.2 million drunk driving trips in Canada during the last year when they felt they were over the legal alcohol limit. Some 4.4 % of drivers are responsible for 92.4 % of these drunk driving trips indicating that a small group of repeat offenders is the main cause of the problem. Canadians remain concerned about drinking and driving because they believe the problem is riskier than other dangerous road behaviors, and that drinking-drivers are unconcerned about the risk they pose. Over 70 % of Canadians agree or strongly agree with mandatory ignition interlocks, physical coordination tests, vehicle impoundment, and increased police spot checks to fight drinking and driving. Among these various countermeasures, ignition interlocks received the highest of level of support. A copy of the full report, The Road Safety Monitor 2006: Drinking and Driving is available on TIRF's website at:

http://www.trafficinjuryresearch.com/publications/pub_details.cfm?intPubID=220

EU To Issue A Credit Card Format Driving Licence By 2013

From 2013, all newly issued or replacement driving licenses will be in a single EU-wide credit card format, according to legislation given second reading approval by the Parliament. The new format will



replace the more than 110 existing different models in the Member States. The new licenses will have a limited administrative validity of ten years, which Member States are free to increase to up to fifteen years. For trucks and buses the license is valid for five years. Member States can choose whether to introduce regular medical exams for drivers. The new directive will harmonize the existing classes of vehicles. For motorcycles a "step-up approach" will become obligatory in all Member States. The new directive also seeks to combat "driving license tourism": it says Member States must refuse to issue a driving license to an applicant whose permit has been restricted, suspended or withdrawn in another Member State.